

Parks and Open Space Element



City of Belmont, California

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PARKS AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

City of Belmont

ADOPTED

October 27, 1992

Prepared by:

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Greenbrae, California

Under Contract to:

Callander Associates
San Mateo, California

For:

City of Belmont, California

TABLE AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

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TO MY PARENTS

My parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Smith, for their love, support, and encouragement throughout my life.

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Myself, for my perseverance, determination, and hard work.

TO MY FUTURE

My future, for the challenges and opportunities it holds.

My future, for the dreams and aspirations I have for myself.

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I. Introduction

In early 1992, the City Council authorized the preparation of a Parks and Open Space Master Plan. As part of that effort, an update of the parks and open space portions of the General Plan was initiated. This new Parks and Open Space Element of the Belmont General Plan is the result.

A. Authority

The California Government Code requires each city and county to adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development within the jurisdiction's planning area. The general plan must contain a statement of development policies and include diagram(s) and text setting forth objectives, principles, standards and plan proposals. Seven general plan elements are mandated:

- ☐ Land use
- ☐ Circulation
- ☐ Housing
- ☐ Conservation
- ☐ Open space
- ☐ Noise
- ☐ Safety

This document is intended to meet all State requirements for open space elements and to provide policies and standards for parks and recreation facilities as allowed by State law. Those policies and standards then become the basis for the City's requiring dedication of land and/or payment of in-lieu fees for parks and recreation facilities when approving major subdivisions.

B. Review Process/Public Participation

The current (1992) planning process involves both the preparation of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan and the revision of the parks, recreation, and open space portions of the General Plan. An advisory committee, including City staff and two members each from the Planning Commission and the Parks and Recreation Commission, was formed to review each document and provide input throughout the process.

Several Advisory Committee meetings, a public participation workshop, Parks and Recreation Commission meetings, Planning Commission and City Council meetings and public hearings were held during the preparation of the Master Plan and this Element. Each document was subject to review by the respective commission prior to final adoption by the City Council. Staff provided general noticing of all meetings and mailed notices to interested individuals, agencies and organizations.

C. Purpose

Belmont has a long history of planning for parks, recreation and open space. The City's current policies on parks and open spaces are set forth mostly in the Land Use-Open Space Element of the Belmont General Plan, adopted in 1982. Trails and pathways are currently addressed within the Circulation Element of the 1982 Plan. Previous versions of the General Plan were adopted in 1977 and 1968. Many of the 1982 General Plan's action items have been accomplished, such as development of the Belmont Sports Complex and Twin Pines Park. The parks, recreation and open space goals and policies of the 1982 General Plan need to be updated after ten years and the availability of the 1990 Census.

Since 1982, two major area plans have been adopted which include parks and open space policies in addition to those in the General Plan. The San Juan Hills Area Plan was adopted in 1988, and the Western Hills Area Plan was adopted in 1990. To a lesser extent, the Downtown Specific Plan adopted in 1990 also includes parks and open space policies. Specific policies of these three area plans which pertain to parks and open space have not been included in this Parks and Open Space Element due to the level of detail in the plans and their recent adoptions. Summary information only is provided.

D. Organization

This Parks and Open Space Element is divided into seven sections. Section I. is the Introduction. The authority for the City preparing and adopting the element is explained. The review process and public participation procedures are described. The City's purpose for preparing this 1992 Element is set forth.

Section II. includes important background information necessary to develop Element goals, policies and implementation measures. Belmont's regional setting, planning area and neighborhoods are described. Population and community characteristics are discussed at length. Changes over time are analyzed.

Section III. lists and describes existing park facilities, bicycle paths and lanes, and open space lands. Existing facilities are mapped. Section IV. includes the all important standards and definitions used in the Parks and Open Space Element. Park deficiencies, current and future, are analyzed. Different types of open space lands are defined and identified.

Section V. contains the Element's goals and policies, divided into parks and recreation, open space and trails and pathways subsections. Section VI. contains the implementation program to carry out the goals and policies of the Element.

Section VII., the Appendix, contains a checklist of State law requirements met by the Element.

II. Background

A. Regional Setting

The City of Belmont is located in San Mateo County, midway between San Francisco and Palo Alto. The City extends from San Francisco Bay to the ridge east of Crystal Springs Reservoir and Interstate Highway 280. Belmont is adjacent to the cities of San Mateo to the north/northwest, Redwood City to the east/southeast and San Carlos to the south. San Francisco watershed lands lie to the west of Belmont.

U. S. Highway 101 and El Camino Real are major north/south travel corridors that traverse Belmont. Ralston Avenue is the major east/west local arterial, connecting Highway 101 with State Highway 92/Interstate 280 northwest of the City limits. See Figure 1.

B. Planning Area

The Belmont Planning Area includes all land presently within the City limits, all land within the sphere of influence as established by the San Mateo County Local Agency Formation Commission, and two unincorporated parcels--a triangle formed by Ralston Avenue, State Route 92 and Adelaide Way and a parcel between Carlmont High School and Cranfield Avenue. The Planning Area includes all land that is now, or is expected to be in the future, under the planning jurisdiction of the City of Belmont. See Figure 1.

C. Neighborhoods

The Belmont Planning Area is divided into fourteen neighborhoods, each with common characteristics, development patterns and planning issues. Due to U. S. Census tract boundaries, those fourteen neighborhoods are sometimes combined into five neighborhood planning areas as depicted in Figure 2. The generalized existing land uses of the fourteen neighborhoods are listed on Table 1.

FIGURE 1. Regional Setting

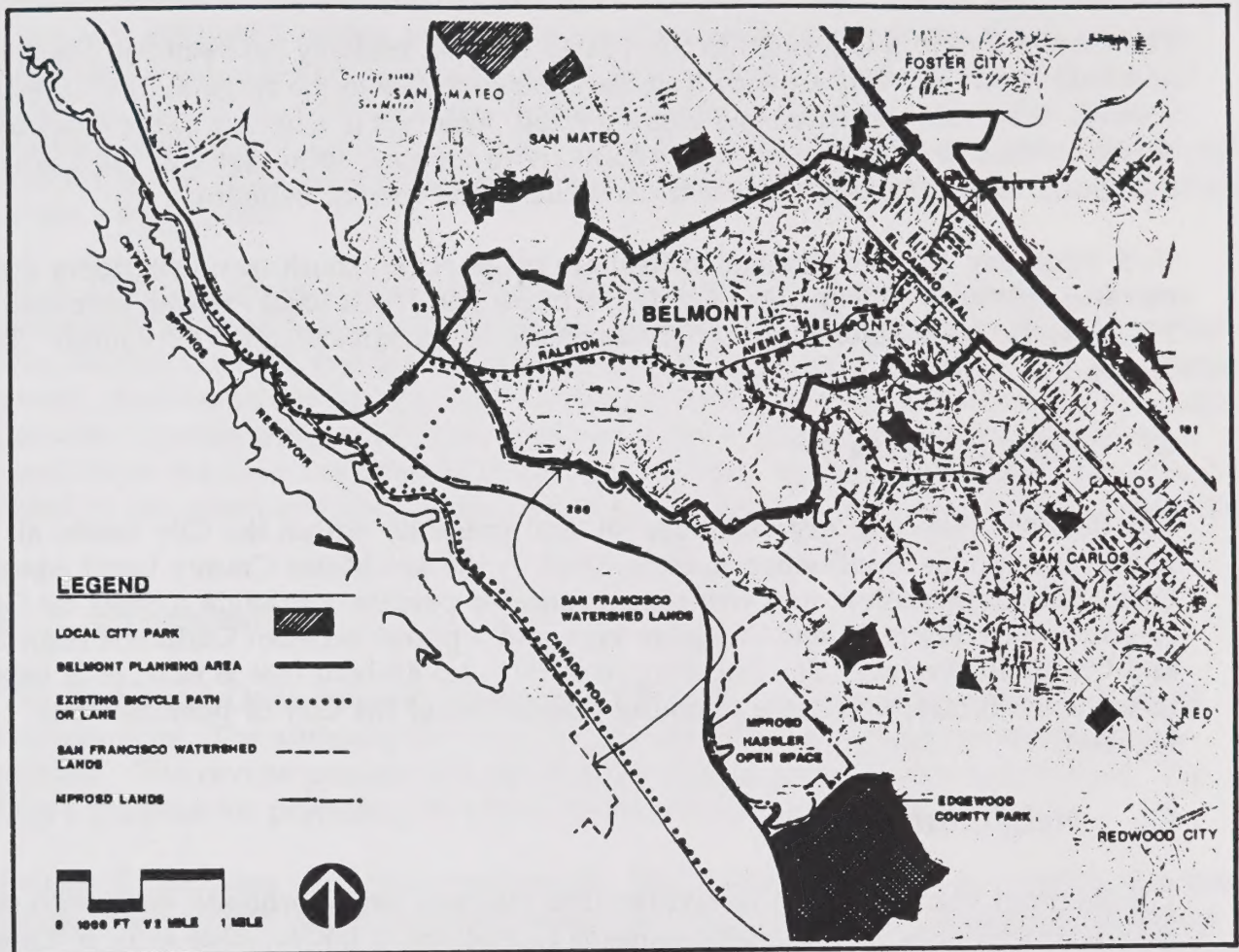


FIGURE 2. BELMONT'S NEIGHBORHOODS

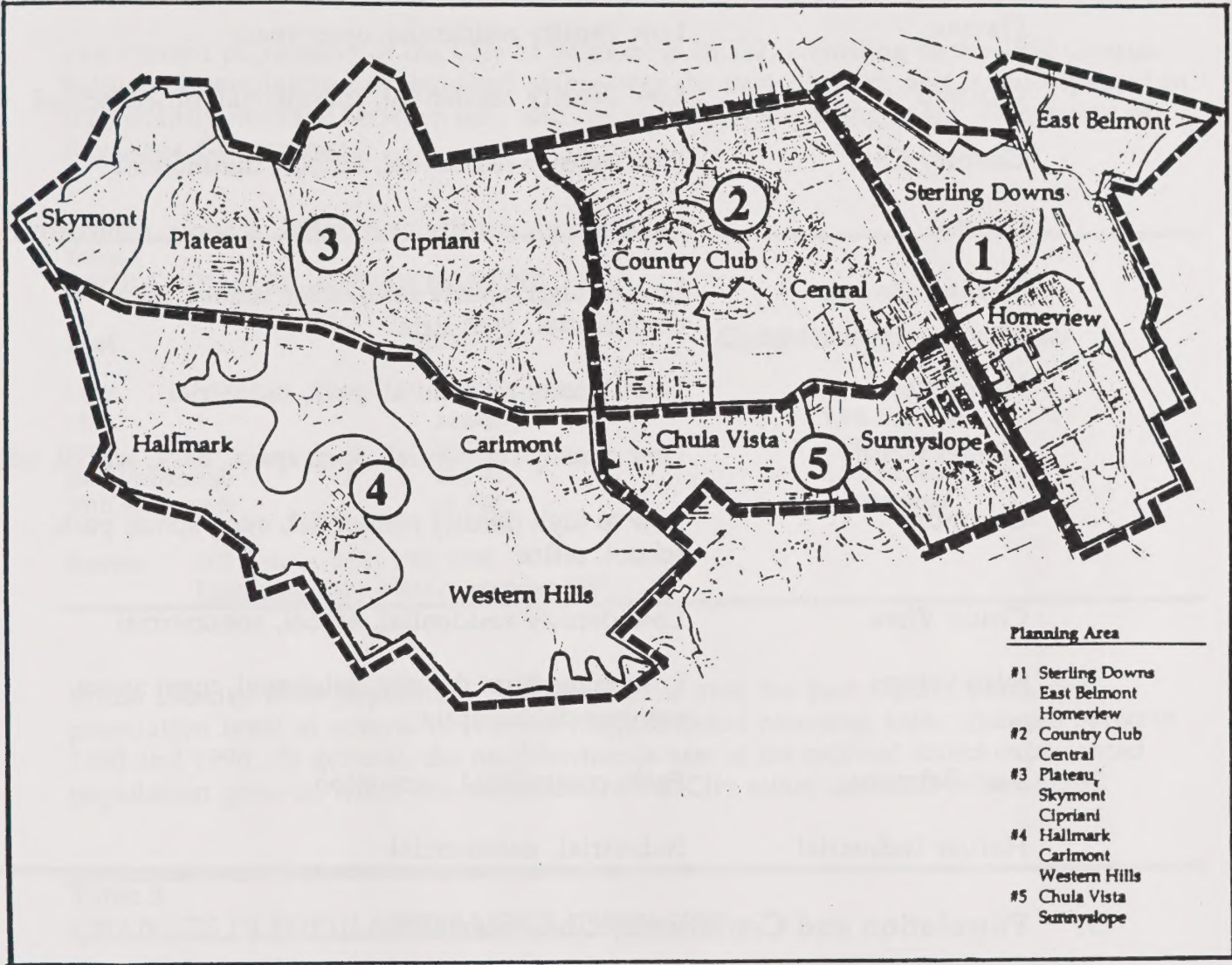


Table 1.
LAND USES BY NEIGHBORHOOD

<u>NEIGHBORHOOD</u>	<u>LAND USES</u>
Skymont	Low density residential, open space
Plateau	Low density residential, open space
Cipriani	Low density residential, commercial, office, school
Country Club	Low density residential, school, commercial
Central	Low to high density residential, schools, commercial
Sterling Downs	Low to high density residential, school, park, commercial, industrial
Homeview	Low density residential, park, industrial
Western Hills	Low density residential, open space, park, school, office
Carlmont	Low to high density residential, open space, park, school, office
Chula Vista	Low density residential, school, commercial
Sunnyslope	Low to medium density residential, open space, commercial, hospital
East Belmont	Park, commercial, recreation
Harbor Industrial	Industrial, commercial

D. Population and Community Characteristics

Planning for parks and recreation facilities and open space relies on an understanding of the people who live in the community and how the population is expected to change in the future. Population levels are the major determinant of the amount of acreage of parkland and number of individual facilities to be provided. Population characteristics such as age, ethnicity, and household composition are important factors in determining appropriate types of recreation facilities and programs.

Belmont is a fairly affluent middle class residential community located in a major metropolitan area characterized by a high cost of living. The mean value of a single-family home in Belmont is \$418,021. Most residents (96.8%) are white or Asian. Most (75.3%) are family members, and an average of 2.34 persons reside in each household. Female persons account for 51.2% of the population.

Population

The current population of the City of Belmont is 24,127, according to the 1990 Census. Belmont's population has remained stable over the past 20 years, and is not expected to significantly increase between now and the year 2010, according to the Association of Bay Area Governments.

Table 2
POPULATION LEVEL - CITY OF BELMONT

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Change During Preceding Decade</u>
1970	23,667	-
1980	24,505	1.9% increase
1990	24,127	1.5% decrease
2000 (projected)	25,700	6.5% increase
2010 (projected)	25,700	no change

Sources: U.S. Census, 1970, 1980, 1990
Projections 90 by ABAG, December 1989

While the city-wide population has varied little over the past twenty years, the population level of several of the five neighborhood planning areas changed between 1980 and 1990. In general, the neighborhoods east of the railroad tracks experienced population growth, while the remainder of the City either declined or stabilized.

Table 3
CHANGES IN POPULATION LEVEL, 1980 to 1990

<u>City of Belmont</u>	<u>East Belmont Sterling Downs Homeview</u>	<u>Central Country Club</u>	<u>Cipriani The Plateau Skymont</u>	<u>Carlmont W. Hills Hallmark</u>	<u>Chula Vista Sunnyslope</u>
1980: 24,505 1990: 24,127	1980: 3,362 1990: 3,624	1980: 6,688 1990: 6,529	1980: 5,923 1990: 5,601	1980: 5,890 1990: 5,925	1980: 2,640 1990: 2,448
1.5% decrease	15.2% increase	2.3% decrease	5.4% decrease	0.5% increase	7.3% decrease

Source: U.S. Census, 1980 and 1990

Age

Age structure is important because different age groups demand different kinds of park and recreation services and open space facilities. For instance, young children require safe play areas, youth are benefited by supervised programs, younger adults will likely demand opportunities for active recreation and an older population will call for opportunities for social interaction. Table 4 shows the age distribution for the entire City, and as broken down into the five neighborhood planning areas. East Belmont /Sterling Downs/Homeview has the greatest percentage of younger adults. Cipriani/Plateau/Skymont has the greatest percentage of middle adults. Chula Vista/Sunnyslope has the greatest percentage of seniors.

Table 4
AGE DISTRIBUTION - 1990

Age Group	City of Belmont	East Belmont Sterling Downs Homeview	Central Country Club	Cipriani The Plateau Skymont	Carlmont Western Hills Hallmark	Chula Vista Sunnyslope
Young children (under 5 years)	6%	7%	5%	7%	5%	7%
Children (5-11 years)	7%	7%	6%	8%	6%	7%
Teens (12-18 years)	6%	6%	6%	7%	5%	6%
Younger Adults (19-34 years)	29%	39%	28%	21%	34%	22%
Middle Adults (35-64 years)	41%	34%	42%	47%	39%	42%
Seniors (Over 65 years)	11%	7%	13%	10%	11%	16%

Source: U.S. Census, 1990

Table 5 indicates that although the overall population level has stabilized, the age distribution shifted somewhat between 1980 and 1990. Increased percentages of children under 5 years and people over 65 years indicate that the population is simultaneously aging and experiencing a baby "boomlet".

Table 5
CHANGES IN AGE DISTRIBUTION, 1980 to 1990

	<u>1980 pop. (% of total)</u>	<u>1990 pop. (% of total)</u>	<u>Change 1980 - 1990</u>
<u>City of Belmont</u>			
Under 5	1,080 (4.4%)	1,430 (5.9%)	32.4% increase
Over 65	1,933 (7.9%)	2,755 (11.4%)	42.5% increase
<u>East Belmont, Sterling Downs, and Homeview</u>			
Under 5	193 (5.7%)	267 (7.4%)	38.3% increase
Over 65	172 (5.1%)	250 (6.9%)	45.3% increase
<u>Central and Country Club</u>			
Under 5	269 (4%)	337 (5.2%)	25.2% increase
Over 65	655 (9.8%)	866 (13.3%)	32.2% increase
<u>Cipriani, The Plateau, and Skymont</u>			
Under 5	344 (5.8%)	379 (6.8%)	10.1% increase
Over 65	313 (5.3%)	579 (10.3%)	85.0% increase
<u>Carlmont, Western Hills, and Hallmark</u>			
Under 5	215 (3.7%)	282 (4.8%)	31.2% increase
Over 65	508 (8.6%)	679 (11.5%)	33.7% increase
<u>Chula Vista and Sunnyslope</u>			
Under 5	59 (2.2%)	165 (6.7%)	179.7% increase
Over 65	285 (10.8%)	381 (15.6%)	33.7% increase

Source: U.S. Census 1990

Ethnicity

Belmont is a predominantly white community, with Asians making up the next largest population. Persons of Hispanic origin account for 7.3% of the total City population. (Hispanic people are included within all five racial groups by the U.S. Census.) Table 6 indicates that the ethnic composition remains relatively similar in each of the five neighborhood planning areas. Notable exceptions are the higher-than-average representation of blacks and Hispanic-origin persons in East Belmont/Sterling Downs/Homeview, of whites in Chula Vista/Sunnyslope, and of Asians in Carlmont/Western Hills/Hallmark.

Table 6
ETHNIC COMPOSITION - 1990

Ethnic Group	City of Belmont	East Belmont S. Downs Homeview	Cipriani Central Cntry Club	Carlmont The Plateau Skymont	Western Hills Hallmark	Chula Vista Sunnyslope
White	86.8%	83.9%	87.8%	88.6%	84.7%	89.5%
Asian & Pacific Islander	10.0%	9.6%	9.0%	9.8%	12.3%	7.8%
Black	1.6%	3.8%	1.2%	0.8%	1.5%	1.3%
Native American	0.4%	0.5%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.6%
Other	1.2%	2.0%	1.5%	0.4%	1.1%	0.7%
(Hispanic origin)	(7.3%)	(11.6%)	(7.3%)	(5.3%)	(6.7%)	(6.6%)

Source: 1990 Census

Housing Values

The mean value of an owner-occupied housing unit (single family home or condominium unit) is \$418,021. Of the five Belmont neighborhood planning areas, housing values are roughly equal to the city-wide average in three areas, while they are significantly lower in the East Belmont/Sterling Downs/Homeview Area, and significantly higher in Carlmont/Western Hills/Hallmark.

Table 7
MEDIAN VALUE OF OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS

City of Belmont	East Belmont Sterling Downs Homeview	Central Country Club	Cipriani The Plateau Skymont	Carlmont Western Hills Hallmark	Chula Vista Sunnyslope
\$418,021.	\$309,015.	\$406,643.	\$415,935.	\$503,732.	\$419,915.

Source: U.S. Census, 1990

Household Composition

Table 8 indicates some variation in household types between planning areas. The East Belmont/Sterling Downs/Homeview area includes higher-than-average representation of single parents, single heads-of-household, non-family households, and one-person households. The Cipriani/Plateau/Skymont area includes a significantly higher percentage of married-with-children and married-without-children households, and a very low percentage of one-person and non-family households. The Chula Vista/Sunnyslope area also has a higher-than-average percentage of married households. Carlmont/Western Hills/Hallmark has a lower representation of married households and the greatest percentage of one-person households.

Table 8
HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION - 1980

Household Type	City of Belmont	East Belmont Sterling Downs Homeview	Cipriani Central Country Club	Carlmont The Plateau Skymont	Western Hills Hallmark	Chula Vista Sunnyslope
Married (with children)	20.8%	18.5%	19.7%	29.9%	15.6%	23.2%
Married (without children)	32.0%	20.0%	35.2%	41.7%	26.7%	37.1%
Male Household (with children)	1.2%	2.2%	1.1%	1.0%	0.8%	1.0%
Male Household (Single)	1.8%	2.7%	1.9%	1.4%	1.8%	1.0%
Female Household (with children)	3.4%	4.7%	3.1%	2.9%	3.2%	4.1%
Female Household (Single)	3.6%	3.9%	4.4%	3.0%	2.9%	4.1%
Non-family Household (Unrelated singles)	10.2%	14.3%	8.4%	6.3%	13.3%	7.2%
One-person Household	27.0%	33.5%	26.2%	13.7%	35.6%	22.2%

Source: 1990 Census

III. Existing Facilities

A. Parks

The City of Belmont contains approximately 95.5 acres of formalized recreation area available at developed City parks and schoolgrounds. In addition, the City owns and leases 101 acres of open space areas available for public recreation use. The following list identifies the City's community, neighborhood and mini parks. The Parks and Open Space Master Plan contains more detailed information about these parks.

COMMUNITY PARKS

BELMONT SPORTS COMPLEX

Location: North Shoreway Road
Size: 11 acres
Description: Numerous facilities, ranging from lighted ball fields to picnic/barbecue areas and play structure. Wide range of programmed activities.

CARLMONT HIGH SCHOOL

Location: 1400 Alameda De Las Pulgas
Size: 13.5 acres
Description: Owned and maintained by Sequoia Union High School District, with many facilities (ballfields, swimming pool, gymnasium, tennis courts, etc.) and a wide range of programmed activities serving the entire community

RALSTON INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

Location: 2675 Ralston Avenue
Size: 7.36 acres
Description: Owned by the Belmont School District, with many facilities (ballfields, basketball courts, soccer fields, etc..) and youth sports and after school recreation programs serving the entire City.

TWIN PINES PARK

Location: 1225 Ralston Avenue
Size: 21.09 acres
Description: Numerous special facilities (senior and community center, the "Lodge", sculpture garden), park improvements (play apparatus, volleyball, barbecue, trails, etc.) for a wide range of programmed and special event activities for the entire community.

BARRETT COMMUNITY CENTER AND PARK

Location: 1835 Belburn Drive
Size: 3.38 acres
Description: Special facilities (child care, art galleries) and activities (theatre group, artist association) serving subregional area while providing neighborhood park type amenities also.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

ALEXANDER PARK

Location: Yorkshire Way between Marine View and Mountain View
Size: 1.3 acres
Description: Several improvements (tennis courts, horseshoes, picnic area, play apparatus) for a modest range of programmed activities.

BELAMEDA PARK

Location: Alameda de las Pulgas between Carlmont Drive and Valerga Drive
Size: 3 acres
Description: Limited facilities needing upgrading, with close proximity to library.

CENTRAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Location: 525 Middle Road
Size: 3.42 acres
Description: Owned by the School District and maintained by the City, with fields, courts, play apparatus, and programmed youth sports leagues.

CIPRIANI PARK/ATHLETIC FIELDS AND SCHOOL

Location: Buena Vista Avenue at Monserat Avenue
Size: 6 acres
Description: Limited facilities (practice fields, play apparatus, barbecue and picnic, etc.), with School District childcare.

FOX ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Location: 3100 St. James Road, Fox School
Size: 6.1 acres
Description: Playing fields and courts, with youth sports leagues.

HALLMARK PARK

Location: Hallmark Drive between Wakefield and Comstock Circle
Size: 5.2 acres
Description: Passive use and view areas, with tennis courts.

MCDUGAL PARK

Location: Solano Drive, Belmont
Size: 4.5 acres
Description: Ballfields, courts and play apparatus, with youth sports leagues.

NESBIT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Location: 500 Biddulph Way
Size: 6.5 acres
Description: Ballfields, courts and play apparatus, with youth and adult sports leagues.

O'DONNELL PARK

Location: Ralston Avenue at Irwin Street
Size: 0.87 acre
Description: Limited facilities with no programmed activities.

WAKEFIELD VIEW PARK

Location: Wakefield Street
Size: 1.03 acres
Description: Overview and pedestrian paths.

MINI PARKS

COLLEGE VIEW PARK

Location: College View Way
Size: 0.15 acre
Description: Lawn and bench.

FOX TOT LOT

Location: St. James Drive adjacent to Fox Elementary School
Size: 0.73 acre
Description: Lawn, play apparatus and mini-amphitheatre.

HASTINGS TOT LOT

Location: Hastings Street
Size: 0.13 acre
Description: Benches and play apparatus.

PATRICIA WHARTON PARK

Location: Between North Road and Middle Road
Size: 0.1 acre
Description: Benches and path.

B. Bicycle Paths and Lanes

Bicycle routes provide recreation opportunities and alternative methods of transportation, and can link residential areas with parks and other destinations. Belmont currently has on-street bicycle lanes (Caltrans Class 2 bicycle routes) on portions of Ralston Avenue, and short segments of off-street bicycle paths (Caltrans Class 1 bicycle routes) at the western end of Ralston and in the Island Park area east of 101. The "Ralston Trail" at the west end of Ralston connects Belmont to the existing Crystal Springs Trail and the San Mateo County trail system, including the proposed San Francisco Bay Area Ridge Trail.

C. Open Space

Belmont is fortunate to have retained a significant amount of hilly undeveloped land in the western portion of the City. These areas contribute greatly to the character of Belmont and possess many inherent values: scenic beauty, visual relief from the urbanized area, preservation of natural ecosystems, watershed management, and providing space for passive recreation and outdoor education.

The undeveloped areas consist mostly of steeply sloping hillsides and canyons that are surrounded by residential development on the ridges above. Small portions have been disturbed by grading and drainage improvements associated with the adjacent development. Vegetation is predominantly native and includes grassland, oak woodland, riparian woodland, chaparral, and scrub.

The higher elevations offer vistas from nearby Sugarloaf Mountain to the San Francisco skyline and East Bay, while the canyons offer a more intimate natural experience and a feeling of separation from the surrounding urban area. Belmont's open spaces are further described in the City's San Juan Hills Area Plan (March 1988) and the Western Hills Area Plan (June 1990).

While much of Belmont's undeveloped land is either in public ownership (City land) or quasi-public ownership (College of Notre Dame lands leased to the City), the remainder is privately held and is subject to residential development. The two Area plans, which have been adopted as amendments to the City's General Plan, have designated these areas as "Hillside Residential and Open Space". Policies adopted for these areas limit development and encourage the preservation of open space, vegetation, and natural resources.

The open space areas in East Belmont are linked by the sloughs to San Francisco Bay. The sloughs are important as drainage channels, fish and wildlife habitats and for water related recreation. The Baylands Bird Sanctuary is an open space area serving as a habitat preserve for birds and other marsh wildlife.

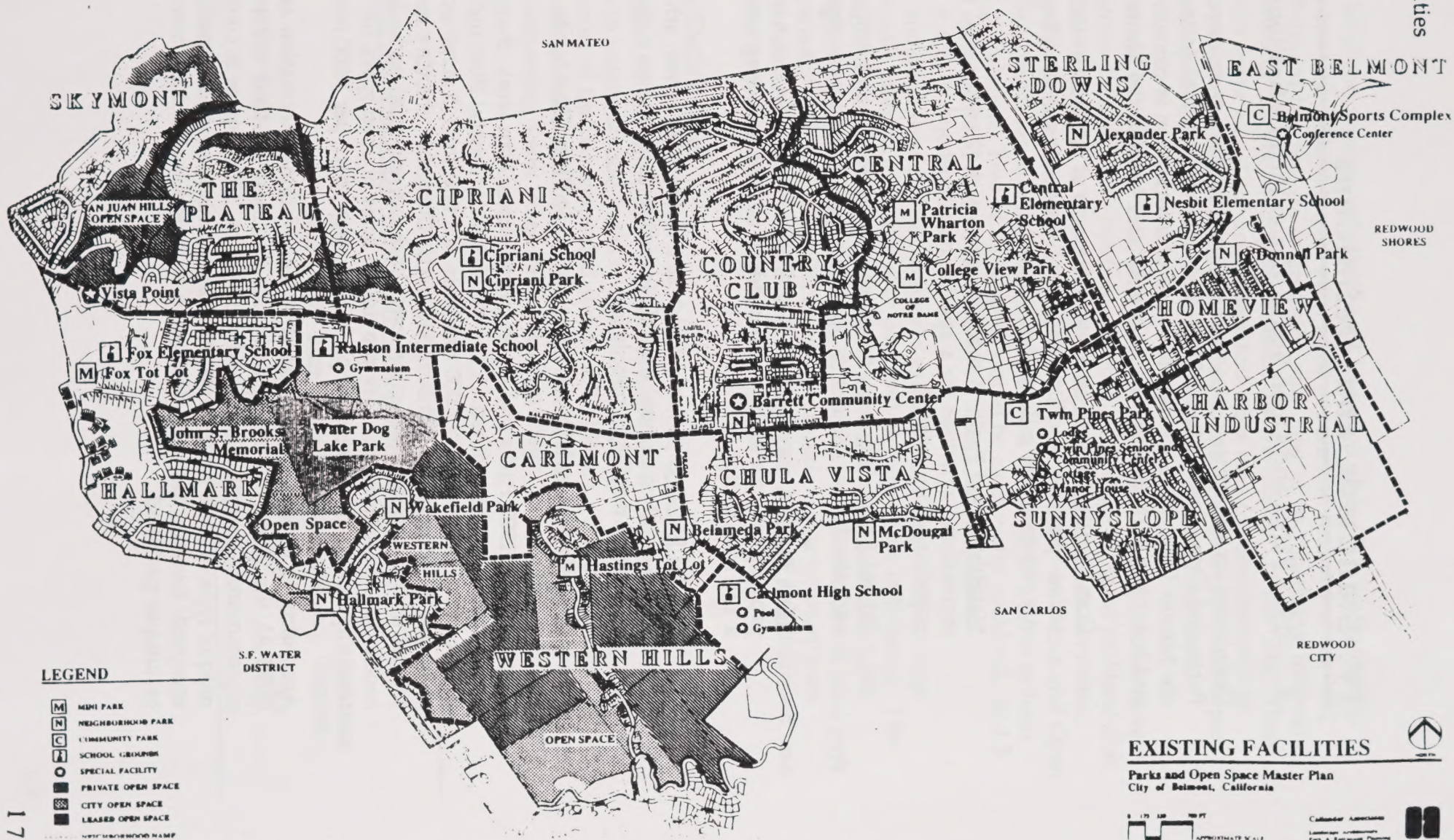
Table 9
OPEN SPACE INVENTORY

<u>Open Space Area</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Ownership</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
San Juan Hills	Private	250 Separate Owners	6.5 acres	San Juan Hills Area Plan encourages preservation of open space.
John S. Brooks	Public	City	51 acres	Dedicated to City in 1978.
Water Dog Lake Park	Quasi-Public	College of Notre Dame	50 acres	Land is long-term leased by the City.
Carlmont Canyon	Private	Private	90 acres	Development is limited to 33 units in one location.
Western Hills- West of Hastings	Public	City	120 acres	Open space management and trails development must be coordinated with Carlmont Canyon area.
Western Hills - East of Hastings	Private	Private	86 acres	Development limited to 38 units in one location.

Of the lands south of Ralston, 96% of the privately-owned undeveloped land is held by two owners. This land includes a 90-acre holding in the Carlmont Canyon, and the 86-acre slope east of Hastings Drive. Under the Western Hills Area Plan, development is limited to 33 units in Carlmont Canyon and 38 units east of Hastings Drive. The Area Plan requires the new housing units to be clustered together on the Carlmont Canyon valley floor, and east of Hastings to be clustered on the lower portion of the site near Valerga Drive. This approach will leave the steep hillsides undeveloped.

North of Ralston, undeveloped land in the San Juan Hills consists of over 250 separate private ownerships on over 500 vacant lots. The San Juan Hills Area Plan seeks to control future development by encouraging cluster development, density transfer, reconsolidation of lots, lot merger, limiting the number of houses in vacant subdivided areas, restricting development in geologic hazard areas, and other methods. The Plan also encourages protection of natural resources and views, and the establishment of a continuous public greenbelt.

FIGURE 3 Existing Facilities



IV. Standards and Definitions

A. 1992 Parks and Open Space Master Plan Definitions

Definitions for the various types of local park facilities were developed with the 1992 Parks and Open Space Master Plan. The following general definitions are derived from the Master Plan. A more detailed level of information is contained in the Master Plan and is subject to modification on a case by case basis as the Master Plan is implemented.

Community Park: A large park (20 acres or larger) that includes passive and active recreation facilities that serve the entire city or substantial portion of the city, up to a four mile radius.

Neighborhood Park: A medium sized park (2 to 10 acres) that provides basic recreational activities for a specific neighborhood within a 1/2 mile radius with populations up to 5000.

School Park: City park developed on School District property in cooperation with the School District to provide neighborhood park-type facilities.

Mini Park: A small park (1/4 to 2 acres) located within a residential area to provide play areas for small children or passive sitting areas for residents within a 1/4 mile radius.

Special Facility: A facility such as a community center, athletic complex, aquatic center or other cultural or athletic facility that services a specific need for a portion of the City's population.

B. 1992 Parks and Open Space Master Plan Standards

As part of the 1992 Parks and Open Space Master Plan work, the standard for parkland in Belmont was reexamined. The 1982 Belmont General Plan includes a standard of 8.5 acres of parkland for each 1,000 residents. Of that total, 5 acres would be community park and 3.5 would be neighborhood park. Currently, the City provides approximately 4 acres of developed community, neighborhood and mini parks for every 1,000 residents. In addition, the City provides 4 acres of open space for every 1,000 residents, resulting in a total of 8 acres of parks and open space per 1,000 residents.

According to guidelines developed by The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), the intent of acreage standards for "local" parks is to establish target amounts of community, neighborhood and mini parks. Open space is considered a regional or unique type of park space to be provided in addition to local parks. No commonly accepted formula has been developed to determine the ideal acreages for such regional or unique parkland.

With regard to local community, neighborhood, and mini parks, it is unrealistic to expect that Belmont will achieve the 8.5 acre/1,000 population standard of the 1982 General Plan. Belmont is a mature community, and most of its remaining undeveloped land is located in the steeply sloping areas on the western end of the City. These areas are generally more suited for open space and trails than for development of traditional local parks. Concerted community effort to raise funds to purchase expensive, already developed land would be required to approach the 1982 standard.

Given the limitations of available land and resources to fund park acquisition, development and maintenance, the City needs to establish a standard for local parkland that is feasible to achieve and that is within the City's capability to maintain over time. After surveying other communities and available land in Belmont, the Parks and Open Space Master Plan concludes that Belmont should have a standard of 5 acres of local parks per 1,000 population. Two of those acres would be community parkland, and 3 acres would be neighborhood and mini parks.

This local park standard would result in no net gain of community park acreage because an adequate amount of that type of parkland already exists in Belmont. The standard would, however, lead to the provision of an additional 1 acre per 1,000 residents of neighborhood and mini parkland. The 5 acre per 1,000 residents local park standard acknowledges the lack of available parcels suitable for community park development but reflects opportunities for development of smaller neighborhood and mini parks in the western portions of Belmont.

C. Park Deficiencies

Table 10 illustrates the current (1992) deficiencies based on the 5 acre standard. The 29.5 acre deficiency in neighborhood parks is significant because 10 of the City's 12 neighborhoods fall short of the recommended standard (Table 10). Community park facility demands have been fulfilled with the recent development of the Belmont Sports Complex supplementing Twin Pines Park, Carlmont High School and Ralston Intermediate School.

Table 10
CURRENT (1992) ACREAGE DEFICIENCIES - Population 24,127

	<u>Standard</u> <u>(Acres/1000)</u>	<u>Acres Required</u>	<u>Existing Acres</u>	<u>Deficiency</u> <u>(Surplus)</u>
Neighborhood and Mini Parks	3	72	42.5	29.5
Community Parks	2	48	53.0	(5)
Total Park Acreage	5	120	95.5	24.5

Neighborhood Park Deficiencies

Table 11 summarizes the availability of neighborhood and mini parks in each neighborhood. Only two of Belmont's neighborhoods, Hallmark and Chula Vista, currently meet the 3 acre/1000 population standard. Significant deficiencies occur in the Central, Country Club, and Cipriani neighborhoods. Residential development in these areas has provided few park resources, and has left little undeveloped land available to correct the deficiency. The more-recently developed neighborhoods of Skymont, The Plateau, Western Hills, and Carlmont are also underserved. However, opportunities exist to develop new parks in the undeveloped portions of these neighborhoods.

Table 11
NEIGHBORHOOD PARK ACREAGE REQUIREMENTS
Existing (1990) Population

Neighborhood	1990 Pop.	Existing Acreage	Total Req. 3 Acres/1,000 Pop.	Add'l Acreage Needed
Sterling Downs	3,211	7.8	9.6	1.8
East Belmont	127	0.0	0.3	0.3
Homeview	939	1.0	2.8	1.8
Country Club	3,102	3.4	9.3	5.9
Central	3,423	3.7	10.3	6.6
Plateau & Skymont	1,215	0	3.6	3.6
Cipriani	4,198	6.0	12.6	6.6
Hallmark	1,932	13.0	5.8	(7.2 surplus)
Carlmont	3,030	3.0	9.1	6.1
Western Hills	435	0.1	1.3	1.2
Chula Vista	1,105	4.5	3.3	(1.2 surplus)
Sunnyslope	1,410	0.0	4.2	4.2
TOTAL	24,127	42.5	72.2	29.7

Source: 1990 Census

Future (2000) Park Deficiencies

Belmont's population is expected to stabilize at the 25,700 level by the year 2000. The additional population would create a demand for approximately 8 new acres of parks based on the 5 acre/1,000 standard. Because the population is projected to remain stable from 2000 on, Table 12 below also applies for the anticipated fifteen year (1992 to 2007) planning period of this element and the Parks and Open Space Master Plan.

Table 12

YEAR 2000 ACREAGE DEFICIENCIES - Population 25,700

	Standard (Acres/1,000)	Acres Req'd	Existing Acres	Deficiency (Surplus)
Neighborhood and Mini Parks	3	72	42.5	34.5
Community Parks	2	51	53.0	(2)
Total Park Acreage	5	128	95.5	32.5

D. Open Space Definitions

The State planning law defines "open space land" as any parcel or area of land or water which is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open space use as defined in this section and so designated on an adopted local, regional or state open space plan. The California Government Code recognizes four types of open space:

Open space for the preservation of natural resources includes but is not limited to areas required for the preservation of plant and animal life, including habitat for fish and wildlife species; areas required for ecologic and other scientific study purposes; rivers, streams, bays and estuaries; and coastal beaches, lake shores banks of rivers and streams, and watershed lands.

Open space used for production of managed resources, includes but is not limited to forest lands, rangeland, agricultural lands and areas of economic importance for the production of food or fiber; areas required for the recharge of ground water basins; bays, estuaries, marches, rivers and streams which are important for the management of commercial fisheries; and areas containing major mineral deposits, including those in short supply.

Open space for outdoor recreation includes but is not limited to areas of outstanding scenic, historic and cultural value; areas particularly suited for park and recreation purposes, including access to lake shores, beaches, and rivers and streams; and areas which serve as links between major recreation and open space reservations, including utility easements, banks of rivers and streams, trails and scenic highway corridors.

Open space for public health and safety includes but is not limited to areas which require special management or regulation because of hazardous or special conditions such as earthquake fault zones, unstable soil areas, flood plains, watersheds, areas presenting high fire risks, areas required for the protection of water quality and water reservoirs and areas required for the protection and enhancement of air quality.

Belmont has open space lands which fall into three of the State recognized categories. Only open space used for production of managed resources is missing in Belmont.

Natural Resources Open Space

The Natural Diversity Data Base of the California Department of Fish and Game was reviewed to help identify open space land in Belmont needed for the preservation of special natural resources. There are very few special plant or animal species or natural communities in Belmont identified by the Data Base.

Belmont Slough is identified as a special natural community area, with occurrences of California Clapper Rail (*Rallus longirostris obsoletus*), California Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis coturniculus*), Western Snowy Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus*) and the Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse (*Reithrodontomys raviventris*) having been recorded. The California Clapper Rail is a Federally and State listed endangered animal. The California Black Rail is a State listed threatened species. The Western Snowy Plover is a Federally proposed (threatened) species. The Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse is a Federally and State listed endangered species.

The Natural Diversity Data Base identifies a large area near the Highway 92 and Interstate 280 interchange as habitat for the Bay Checkerspot Butterfly (*Euphydryas editha bayensis*). A portion of the area is within Belmont's planning boundaries. The Bay Checkerspot Butterfly is a Federally listed threatened species.

Beyond the above described species and habitats, the following areas are the locally important natural resource open space lands of Belmont:

- ☐ Belmont and O'Neill Sloughs and associated wetlands;
- ☐ Riparian corridors and upper reaches of Belmont and Laurel Creeks;
- ☐ The manmade Waterdog Lake; and
- ☐ The oak woodlands and coastal scrublands of the mostly westside hills.

These physical features significantly define Belmont and provide much of its visual character. While generally not habitat for threatened, rare or endangered species, these areas must be protected if Belmont is to retain its longstanding physical appearance and to continue providing valuable habitat for those species that inhabit, frequent or occasion these natural communities.

City policies in the 1982 General Plan and the Western Hills, San Juan Hills and Downtown plans give high priority to protecting and enhancing the natural resource open space lands in Belmont. The City has adopted a stringent tree ordinance to govern removal of trees on developed and undeveloped land. Particular attention is paid in the tree ordinance to the preservation of oaks, bays, buckeyes and redwoods.

Outdoor Recreation Open Space

Much of Belmont's open space land qualifies as areas needed to protect scenic, historic and cultural values and for park and recreation purposes. Portions of the above listed natural resource areas also have value for passive and active outdoor recreation.

In the case of the sloughs and wetlands, active outdoor recreation must be controlled so as not to damage the natural resource values of these areas. Likewise, riparian areas are fragile and must be carefully protected from intensive outdoor recreation activities and improvements. Waterdog Lake is a special manmade feature with natural resource value and significant outdoor recreation use.

It is more difficult to characterize the oak woodlands and coastal scrublands because significant portions of these areas are also encumbered with public health and safety hazards. Unstable slopes and high fire hazards occur in some of these areas. The scenic value of these vegetation types are high, as they provide visual backdrops for most of the western neighborhoods and for Downtown and the entire City as viewed from the east or from along Ralston Avenue and other major public thoroughfares.

According to the California Archaeological Inventory Northwest Information Center at Sonoma State University, only 15% of the total Belmont planning area has been surveyed for the presence of cultural resources. Prehistoric archaeological sites in this portion of San Mateo County are typically situated at historical marsh margins, along watercourses on valley floors, in narrow valleys along watercourses, on midslope terraces above watercourses and on ridgetops.

While only one prehistoric habitation site has been recorded within the Belmont planning area along Belmont Creek, all of the likely San Mateo County environmental settings for archaeological resources occur in Belmont. It is likely that as yet unrecorded prehistoric cultural sites exist in developed and undeveloped portions of the planning area.

Certain portions of the Belmont planning area are considered more archaeologically sensitive than other. In general, parcels within 200 feet of any watercourse, the marsh edge or the bay shoreline (as they existed in prehistoric times) are of particular concern. Parcels along ridgelines or on low knolls on the valley floor would also be considered sensitive.

Belmont lies within the Pulgas Rancho landgrant dating to 1795. Review of historical maps indicates that at least three homesteads, a stage stop, a hotel and store existed within the planning area by 1856. It is anticipated that archaeological deposits, standing structures and the remains of structures reflecting early settlement and commercial activities exist within the planning area.

The **Ralston House** on the College of Norte Dame campus is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the California Inventory of Historic Resources, the California Historical Landmarks, the Historic American Building Survey and the California Historic Properties Directory, as well as several local historic inventories.

The Point of Historical Interest Log lists the **Good Shepherd Episcopal Church** at 1300 Fifth Avenue. No other local historic properties are listed on State and Federal inventories. Other buildings 45 years or older may be of historic value.

Public Health and Safety Open Space

The Western Hills and San Juan Hills plans identify hazardous areas due to unstable slopes. The Parks and Open Space Master Plan includes an Open Space Fire Hazard Assessment that includes specific recommendations. As with hazardous slopes, fire hazard areas are located mostly in the Western Hills and San Juan Hills.

While riparian areas have important natural resource and scenic values, they can also involve flood hazard areas. Even if technically outside Federally designated flood zones, creeks can pose flood hazards to adjacent, nearby and downstream properties if not properly maintained to avoid buildup of debris that can divert peak stream flows. Creek maintenance programs must be sensitive to the high natural resource and scenic values of riparian areas.

E. Quimby Act Requirements.

The California Subdivision Map Act allows a city, by ordinance, to require the dedication of land or to impose a requirement for the payment of in-lieu fees, or a combination of both approaches, for park and recreational purposes when approving tentative or parcel maps. The ordinance must include definite standards for determining the proportion of the subdivision area to be dedicated and the amount of any in-lieu fee. The amount of land dedicated or fees paid shall be based upon the subdivision's residential density and the number of persons per household. The average number of persons per household should match that of the most recent available Federal census.

Typically, the dedication of land and/or payment of in-lieu fees shall not exceed the proportionate amount necessary to provide three acres of park area per 1,000 persons residing within a subject subdivision. However, if the amount of existing community and neighborhood park area exceeds three acres per 1,000 persons, a city can adopt the calculated amount as a higher standard, not to exceed five acres per 1,000 persons.

The 1992 Parks and Open Space Master Plan finds that Belmont has approximately 95.5 acres of formalized recreation area available at developed City parks and school-grounds. Based on current population, Belmont has approximately 4 acres of parkland plus 4 acres of open space land per 1,000 persons. Belmont's current Quimby Act ordinance is based on a lesser standard of three acres per 1,000 persons.

V. Goals and Policies

The goals and policies that follow are derived from those of the 1982 General Plan as updated given changed circumstances since then and modified projections for the future. Selected generalized policies from the 1992 Parks and Open Space Master Plan are also included.

This element purposefully does not include the same detailed level of specificity as that of the Master Plan. The Master Plan should be reviewed and evaluated on a periodic basis and amended as needed. It is an important tool for the annual City budgeting and capital improvement programming process. The Parks and Open Space Element should be reviewed and evaluated approximately every five years. It is designed as a more generalized policy document so that most subsequent changes to the Master Plan do not typically trigger General Plan amendments.

The constrained fiscal conditions of most levels of government are also taken into account in this Element and in the Master Plan. This Parks and Open Space Element is intended not only to provide a vision of Belmont's future but also a realistic implementation approach for achieving that vision over the next fifteen years.

A. Parks and Recreation Goals and Policies

Goals

1. To provide recreation areas for community and neighborhood use, conveniently located and properly designed to serve the needs of the residents of Belmont.
2. To cooperate with public and private organizations in developing facilities and programs for recreational activities.
3. To preserve and enhance existing parks, recreation areas and facilities to serve neighborhood and community needs to the maximum extent possible.
4. To improve opportunities for active recreation in existing community parks.
5. To increase the availability of neighborhood and mini-park facilities in underserved areas.

Policies

1. Neighborhood recreation facilities should be incorporated into development plans approved for acreage properties in the San Juan Hills and Western Hills consistent with the adopted area plans.
2. The City shall cooperate with the Belmont School District and the Sequoia Union High School District to retain school playgrounds and facilities throughout the City for community and neighborhood recreation use. This cooperation should result in formal agreements between the City and the School Districts.
3. The City should seek ways to achieve no net loss of currently (1992) existing school recreation areas and facilities.
4. The City should develop an agreement with Redwood City for use of future athletic fields in Redwood Shores, due the high use of Belmont facilities by Redwood Shores residents.
5. The City should seek cooperative arrangements and agreements with private organizations and institutions for public use of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities during times when they are unused or underused, particularly in neighborhoods deficient in recreation facilities.
6. As feasible, park dedication and in-lieu fees should be used to provide neighborhood and mini-park facilities in neighborhoods deficient in recreation facilities.
7. As feasible, volunteer contributions and private financial resources should be used in combination with aggressive and creative use of public funds for acquisition, development, maintenance and operation of recreation facilities.
8. The provision of private recreational facilities to serve the community should be encouraged.
9. Recommendations for specific parks and neighborhoods shall be determined by adoption and subsequent amendment of a Parks and Open Space Master Plan.

B. Open Space Goals and Policies

Goals

1. To designate and protect open space lands for the preservation of scenic areas, views, trees, natural drainageways and plant and wildlife habitats; for outdoor recreation; for protection of historical and cultural resources; for public health and safety.
2. To actively explore various methods, including but not limited to regulation, development review, dedication of easements or fee title, acquisition of easements or fee title, and transfer of development rights, for the preservation and protection of open space resources. Dedication or acquisition of fee title should be considered only if public liability exposure is acceptably limited, to the extent feasible.
3. To actively pursue all public and private sources of funding for the protection, enhancement, improvement and maintenance of open space lands.
4. To establish priorities for the protection, enhancement and improvement of open space lands by adoption and subsequent updating of a Parks and Open Space Master Plan.

Policies

1. Major visual features, such as ridgelines and steep valley slopes should be preserved through regulation, development review and/or other public action.
2. Areas hazardous to the public to the public safety and welfare should be retained as open space. Such public health and safety open space land include:
 - a. Steep hillsides unsuitable for development as identified in area plans and other detailed geotechnical studies.
 - b. Appropriate setback areas on either side of known, active fault traces.
 - c. Areas of geologic instability.
 - d. Flood hazard areas.
3. Open space along creeks and sloughs should be protected from future encroachment through regulation, development review, conservation easements and other appropriate actions to preserve these areas in an essentially natural condition.

4. A variety of vistas, ranging from small enclosed private views to more distant public views, should be provided and preserved through regulation, development review, easement dedication and other public actions.
5. Areas and sites of prehistoric, historical and cultural significance should be identified and, as feasible, preserved and protected.
6. Funding strategies and priorities shall be included and periodically updated in the Parks and Open Space Master Plan.
7. In the San Juan Hills and the Western Hills, development shall be clustered and open space preserved and protected consistent with the adopted area plans.
8. The City shall continue its program to identify and protect heritage and other valuable trees on public and private property through enforcement of the tree ordinance.
9. The City shall prohibit off-road motorized vehicle use in open space areas to prevent environmental damage.
10. Open spaces, natural or landscaped, shall be provided in all new development, with particular attention to buffers between different land uses and along streets and pathways.
11. New development on large acreages in natural resource open space areas should protect wildlife habitat by maintaining important wildlife corridors.

C. Trails and Pathways Goals and Policies

Goals

1. To increase public access into open space areas, where feasible and safe, by improving existing formal and informal trails and by establishing new trails.
2. To improve bicycle routes through Belmont to improve local circulation and to connect the community to regional trail systems.

Policies

1. A Parks and Open Space Master Plan should be adopted and updated to identify those trails and pathways to be improved and established to link neighborhoods, open space areas and regional trails.
2. The City should explore opportunities to obtain easements for its trail and bicycleway system.
3. Measures should be taken to improve the visual quality and safety of pedestrian and bicycle pathways, including those along roads.

VI. Implementation Program

A. Parks and Open Space Master Plan

The 1982 General Plan contains Action Program sections throughout. In conjunction with preparation of this Element, a Parks and Open Space Master Plan is being adopted. The greater level of detail of that document includes very specific Action Plan Recommendations for parks, special facilities, schoolgrounds, bicycle paths and lanes, sports facilities, street trees and open space, including trails. Consequently, this 1992 Parks and Open Space Element does not need the same level of detail as the earlier General Plan.

Greater precision and flexibility will result from reliance on a Parks and Open Space Master Plan for identifying and prioritizing action or implementation measures needed to achieve the goals and policies of this Parks and Open Space Element. The Master Plan should be generally reviewed on an annual basis. That review could be part of the City's annual budget and capital improvement program process. This more general Parks and Open Space Element should then be comprehensively reviewed and evaluated every five years.

B. Other Implementation Measures

General Plan

1. Periodically review and evaluate the previously adopted area plans.
2. Revise the General Plan Diagram as needed to implement this Element.

Zoning and Subdivision Regulations

1. Air space should be protected through zoning regulations controlling building height, bulk and lot coverage.
2. The City's Quimby Ordinance should be reviewed and amended, as appropriate.
3. An ordinance should be considered to require park impact fees, payable at building permit issuance, from new residences and bedroom expansions of existing residences.
4. An ordinance should be considered to require park impact fees from new or expanded development generating substantial numbers of employees.

5. Specific controls should be established to protect views to and from hillsides, especially governing the siting and stepping of structures on hillsides to protect cross-canyon views.
6. Encourage clustered residential development of unsubdivided residential land to preserve contiguous expanses of open space to the extent feasible.
7. Define and enforce open space requirements for commercial, industrial and institutional uses.
8. Establish and enforce standards for landscaping of parking lots and rights-of-way in commercial, industrial and institutional areas.
9. The City should pursue negotiating with subdividers of large land tracts to obtain voluntary parkland dedications to be counted as credits toward parkland dedication and/or in-lieu fee payment requirements.

Public Rights-of Way

1. Maintain and improve the open space and visual qualities of the designated street and rights-of-way.
2. Establish and implement a program to plant and maintain street trees.
3. Underground utilities along designated streets.
4. Establish criteria and standards for street lighting and street furniture.
5. Utilize public landscaping standards for improving street scenes in commercial and industrial areas.
6. Develop standards for median landscaping and maintenance.
7. Work with Caltrans and other agencies to improve the designated open space strip along the east side of El Camino north of Ralston Avenue.

Other Agencies and Organizations

1. The City should negotiate formal agreements with the School Districts regarding joint use of facilities and continued public recreational use of currently (1992) existing school facilities.
2. The City should cooperate with other agencies and organizations to maximize public recreation, park and open space opportunities in Belmont.

VII. Appendix

A. State Law Requirements Checklist

Government Code Section 65302(e) requires an open space element in the General Plan.

Government Code Section 65560 defines four categories of open space land.

Government Code Sections 65561 and 65562 set forth the Legislature's intent in requiring open space elements.

Government Code Section 65563 requires that every city and county shall prepare, adopt and submit an open space element to the Secretary of Resources on or before December 31, 1973.

Government Code Section 65564 requires that each open space element contain an action plan consisting of specific programs the City intends to pursue in implementing the element.

Government Code Section 65566 requires that any acquisition or or disposal of open space land is consistent with the open space element.

Government Code Section 65567 prohibits issuance of building permits, approval of subdivisions and adoption of open space zoning unless the construction, subdivision or ordinance is consistent with the open space element.

Public Resources Code Section 5076 requires that every city and county consider demands for trail-oriented recreational use in developing open space elements. Further, the feasibility of integrating local trail routes with appropriate segments of the state trail system must be considered.

Government Code Section 65303 allows general plans to address any other subjects which, in the judgment of the legislative body (Council), relate to the physical development of the county or city.

Appendix

A. The Law of Conservation of Energy

The law of conservation of energy states that the total energy of an isolated system remains constant; it is neither created nor destroyed. This principle is a fundamental concept in physics and applies to all known physical processes.

Energy can be converted from one form to another, but the total amount of energy in a closed system remains constant. For example, potential energy can be converted into kinetic energy, but the sum of the two remains the same.

Mathematically, the law of conservation of energy is expressed as follows: $E_{\text{total}} = E_{\text{kinetic}} + E_{\text{potential}} + E_{\text{thermal}} + \dots$ where E_{total} is the total energy, and the other terms represent different forms of energy.

This law is a direct consequence of the first law of thermodynamics, which states that the change in internal energy of a system is equal to the heat added to the system minus the work done by the system.

The law of conservation of energy is a cornerstone of modern physics and has been experimentally verified to a high degree of accuracy. It is a universal principle that applies to all scales of the universe.

In summary, the law of conservation of energy states that energy cannot be created or destroyed, only transformed from one form to another. This principle is essential for understanding the behavior of physical systems and the universe as a whole.

The law of conservation of energy is a fundamental principle of physics that has been experimentally verified to a high degree of accuracy. It is a universal principle that applies to all scales of the universe.

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